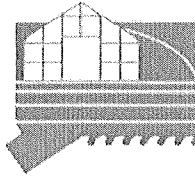
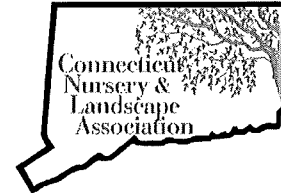


**Connecticut
Florists
Association**



**CONNECTICUT
GREENHOUSE
GROWERS
ASSOCIATION**



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Statement of
Bob Heffernan
Executive Director
Connecticut Green Industries Council
before the Environment Committee
on H.B. 6505 • Including Groundwater in Streamflow Regulations
March 7, 2011

We request this bill be amended to exempt agriculture from groundwater regulation and the streamflow issue.

The DEP Commissioner (Marella) agreed to exempt agriculture from the pending streamflow regulations so long as the farm would agree to adhere to best management practices in water usage approved by the Commissioner of Agriculture. This is the right course of action.

Connecticut's green industry – the 3,000 companies that grow and sell flowers, plants, trees, shrubs, annuals, perennials – is more than half of all of agriculture in the state. Without access to water, our \$1.1 billion annual sales would collapse.

In fact, all of Connecticut agriculture has had an historic access to rivers, streams, and ponds since the state was first colonized. There would be no agriculture in Connecticut without water. Further, it is those very farms who have preserved the natural lands of the state adjacent to our water resources for close to 300 years – today over 300,000 acres of land, with the green industry accounting for 46,000 acres.

We have heard reports that agriculture currently accounts for up to 22% of water usage in the state. We depend upon water to ensure our crops grow and our agribusinesses continue. The key to successfully implementing the proposed streamflow regulations is to create a balance between the water users and the environmental impact of that use.

The green industries of Connecticut careful uses of water are consistent with most segments of agriculture. We water our crops either with overhead sprinklers or by micro irrigation (drip) delivering water precisely where it is needed. In both instances water is applied to our plants and the excess returns to the existing watershed. So, the preservation of agriculture's access to water is integrally tied to preserving Connecticut's environment. The state's public policy is to preserve agriculture and agricultural lands for this very reason.